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ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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4 Dec 58

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
Attn: The Under Secretary of the Air Force

SUBJECT: WS-117L Program

As announced yesterday, ARPA has inaugurated a program to develop a number of systems and techniques which will be employed in the operation of space vehicles. This program, known as DISCOVERER, will, in accordance with the wishes of the Administration, include not only the THOR launchings previously associated with the WS-117L program, but will be continued to include similar projects that are not operationally oriented.

The first such project consists of the THOR vehicles and associated costs previously carried as a part of the WS-117L program. Henceforth, the project will be known as DISCOVERER-THOR project and it will be necessary to establish the identity of this project separate from the WS-117L program. It is recognized that such a division will involve arbitrary distinctions in view of the common items involved and that the division of cost will have to be made on a statistical rather than an accounting basis. Further, it will be necessary that separate development plans and activity and progress reports be submitted. An ARPA Order to this effect is in process.

Consistent with the separation of these programs, we are tentatively re-allocating our FY 1959 monies so as to show approximately $108 million allocable to DISCOVERER-THOR project and $107 million allocable to the SENTRY program. Similarly, for FY 1960 we have allocated $60 million to DISCOVERER-THOR project and $100 million to the SENTRY program.

In response to your memorandum of November 17, and in confirmation of our several conversations on the subject, the Secretary of Defense and ARPA agreed to the assignment by the Air Force of the operational responsibility for the SENTRY program to the ARDC for the next several years and until final objectives are obtained. It is also agreed that the tentative basic center to be established at or near Offutt Air Force Base at some future date, and any related centers pertinent to the program, will be operated by ARDC.

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[redacted] willing to both DISCOVERER-TIROS [redacted] will be communicated to the Secretary of the U.S. Deputy Chief of Staff, Development, with copy to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Research and Development.

Roy W. Johnson
Director

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